

The Random Jottings of Donald Jay from Nelson in Pendle.

Dean House Farm area Wycoller is a village in the civil parish of Trawden

In the quiet village of Wycoller, nestled in the heart of Lancashire, there stood an old and storied farmhouse known as Dean House Farm. This farmhouse held secrets that reached back through the annals of time, secrets that whispered of a history intertwined with magic, mystery, and a touch of the supernatural.

Wycoller itself was a quaint and picturesque village, surrounded by lush greenery and rolling hills. Its cobbled streets and thatched-roof cottages seemed to harken back to a simpler era, where stories were passed down through generations, weaving a tapestry of legends that held both truth and embellishment.

Dean House Farm was no exception. Its origins traced back to the early 17th century, when it was owned by the Cunliffe family. The hall had been constructed in 1550 by Piers Hartley and expanded upon in the late 18th century by Squire Cunliffe. However, the family's fortunes took a downturn, leading to the dismantling of the hall in 1818. Its stones were repurposed to construct a cotton mill, an attempt to settle the debts of Henry Owen-Cunliffe, the hall's last resident.

But as the years passed and the mill hummed with the industry of the times, whispers began to circulate about the farmhouse's history. It was said that the echoes of the past lingered within its walls, that the spirits of the Cunliffe family still roamed the grounds, their presence felt in the rustling of leaves and the soft sigh of the wind.

The legends took on a life of their own, with villagers sharing tales of eerie lights flickering in the windows at night and ghostly figures glimpsed in the moonlight. The farmhouse became shrouded in a mystique that drew the curious and the bold.

One story, in particular, captured the imagination of the village. It was whispered that the farmhouse had been immortalized in the words of a famous novelist, none other than Charlotte Brontë herself. As the tale goes, Jane Eyre, the iconic novel's author, had visited Wycoller and been so entranced by Dean House Farm that she had used it as inspiration for a pivotal setting in her work. The haunted manor house in the novel was said to be a reflection of the farmhouse's enigmatic aura.

As the years turned to decades, Dean House Farm continued to be a magnet for those who sought to unravel its mysteries. Some were drawn by the allure of the supernatural, hoping to catch a glimpse of a specter or hear the faint echoes of the past. Others were enchanted by its historical significance, eager to touch the same stones that had witnessed the passage of time.

And so, on certain nights, villagers would gather near the farm, under the twinkling stars, to partake in the ancient tradition of dancing around a bonfire in the nude. A celebration that harkened back to forgotten times, a celebration where, according to the lore, witches, warlocks, demons, and even the Devil himself would join the festivities.

Dean House Farm and its tales lived on, etched into the fabric of Wycoller's identity.

The farm became a testament to the intertwining of history, myth, and the human imagination—a place where reality and legend danced together in the moonlight, casting long shadows that stretched across the pages of Lancashire's history.

By Donald Jay